

# LIMERICK SOCIALIST

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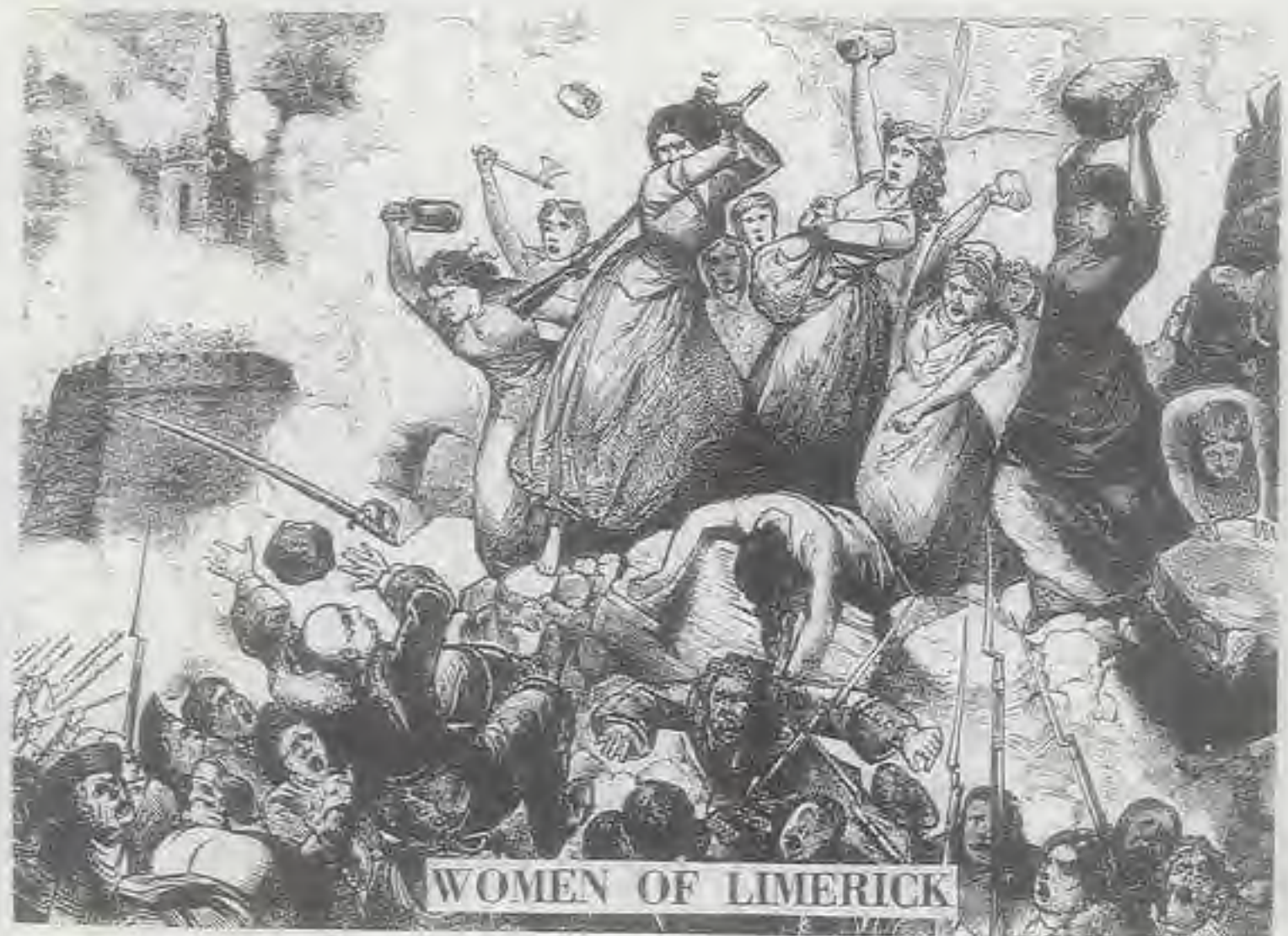


SEAN BOURKE

## Following Sarsfield



Tom O'Donnell



WOMEN OF LIMERICK

ECHOES FROM

— THE —

# BOTTOM DOG

"We must look at life in all its aspects from the point of view of the "Bottom Dog"—the oppressed—be it nation, class, or sex."

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NO. 19 23RD FEBRUARY, 1918 PRICE 1/6d.

## BIRDS OF A FEATHER

I managed to dig into the Egg Market on Saturday — behind the Guld Hen! And would you believe it, Kasey, Kluck and Bugawn are as brazen and as bold as ever. I periscoped them from under an ass and car. The Three Great Glugger Graspers! G.G.G. The Gobble-you-up and Gluttonous Gollaths! FAIs, they foul and blackguard on the run and go-as-you-please on the rampage yet. But wait till I clip their wings and chew off their top knuts and combs. Still, though, Kasey is Cock, and Barret is Brave, a Mrs. O'Malley, from Meelick, is Queen of the Klucks today. She grades the Guilt Egg and Godless Combine of the innocent mealy-mouthed Mammams from The Mague, Monalee and elsewhere. Four shillings, astore, for a dozen of your eggs ... 'Tis most eggs-tras-ordinary! Goliaths and Graves! What? Will no Bottom Dog — some little David come forward and fling Kasey and Co. to the fowls and the birds of the air? 4d. an egg for a B.D. is neither Cheap Sale or Wholesale. What about the fourpence! Where are the women of Limerick? Limerick where the "blest" pictures come! ... Shall Kasey and the Combine continue the Godology? Are you kids? Lay siege to their shells. Don't shell-out to them ...

NO. 20 2ND MARCH, 1918 PRICE 1/6d.

## STRIKE AT DROMBANNA

The workers at Drombanna Creamery have come out on strike as a protest against the non-recognition and victimization of a member of their Society Frank Forde. Bruif, has been acting the "Scab". This individual, who hails from Belfast, is attempting to do a job at the Creamery which was formerly done by an employee who has a wife and six children to support. It will be interesting to know what action the Engineers' Society proposes to take with him. The members of the National Union of Railwaymen will be surprised to learn that Mickey Coffey (Liontamer) is urging his niece, (the only woman employed at Drombanna) to continue working "scab" notwithstanding the fact that she is a member of the Creamery Workers' Society which the farmers are out to smash.

NO. 22 16TH MARCH, 1918 PRICE 1/6d.

## DROMBANNA STRIKE

The strike situation continues, the work of the Creamery being partially carried on by the following farmers' sons: — Davy Ryan, who is scabbing for £2. a week and who is putting into practice in the creamery the knowledge he gained when a hardware Assistant at P. D. Bourke's (hard times have turned the hardware assistant into a creamery worker), Michael Ryan, ex-Grocer's

Assistant who spent some time in Dublin, where he can't have met very many blacklegs; Butler Junior who would be more usefully employed carrying out the Government wishes in tilling the land; Tim Collins, who comes from Macroom, and is doing work of National importance keeping the Creamery fires burning; and, of course, Miss Annie Tomney, whose uncle, Coffey the Liontamer, has taken upon himself the Herculean task of the taming the B.D. (There are more ways of killing a dog than choking him with butter, and Drombanna butter is very scarce now). Social rank is quickly forgotten when it comes to a question of fighting the workers. Mr. Swank Farmer Conheady's action in driving the Drombanna Glasgow-made lorry reminds us of this. We wonder what his sisters who move in high society, (not on top of a lorry) think of their brother's antics. The work is all being done under the managerial supervision of Paddy Lynn who, like a faithful Captain, will be the last man to leave the sinking ship ...

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## LABOUR DAY

As mentioned in a recent issue, Dublin organised workers have decided to observe the 1st May (Wednesday) this year as a big holiday Labour Day. Here in Limerick some Trade Unionists are not letting the grass grow under their feet, and while not going as far as their Dublin fellow-workers, they have decided to hold Labour Day on the first Sunday in May. The Trades Council are moving and very soon it is hoped to have full details published. We wish the project every success. We are certain to have the undivided support of every Trades Union Body in the City. Let Labour show its strength in no unmistakeable manner and its oppressors its power:—

"We sing no song of wailing no song of sight or tears,  
High are our hopes and stout our hearts and banished all our fears.  
Our flag is raised above us so that all the world may see  
'Tis Labour's faith and Labour's arm alone can Labour free".

## KING GOLD.

King Gold reclined on his lofty throne,  
His face aflame with wine;  
He laughed with glee, "Aha", said he  
"Aha, the world is mine".  
The workers may toil in mine and field,  
In shop, in factory;  
They sow the seed and pluck the weed,  
But the harvest is for me.  
For me and the few that feast with me,  
And join in my revels gay;  
We never need soil our hands with toil  
While I my sceptre sway,

Then fill up the cup, my jolly friends,  
For a jovial crew are we;  
We are in luck, and can say with Puck,  
"What fools these mortals be"  
Oh, why do we worship this tyrant king,  
And how does it come to pass,  
That we bow before gold, whose worth all told  
Is eclipsed by one blade of grass?  
King Gold reclined on his lofty throne,  
His face was blanched with fear  
For he knew the shout of the crowd without,  
And knew that his doom was near,  
On his millions of slaves the truth had dawned,  
A grand awakening —  
They rose in their might and girded with right  
Dethroned the tyrant king.  
Now he that produces may freely consume,  
And all having plenty will score.  
To guard it with locks or muzzle the ox,  
The ox that treadth the corn.  
The landlord and loanlord out of the way,  
Humanity's heart will expand,  
For wealth will increase, and plenty and peace  
Shall redeem all this beautiful land.

—W.A.W.

## MEMORIES ...

The business of Littlejohns spying  
For Lynch has been terribly trying.  
But what held O'Malley back  
From contacting Jack?  
Could it be that he thought he was lying?

## WHY-MAN?

Jack said he simply forgot,  
It's happened to us all, has it not?  
But what about Des,  
Who knew, as he says?  
Did he think they wouldn't be caught?

## THE LITTLEJOHN AFFAIR (THE 6-MARK QUESTION)

Surely Mr. O'Malley realised the position Mr. Lynch had put himself in. Could Mr. O'Malley not have taken the trouble to contact his leader, instead of Mr. McCann, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs having to do so? Thus saving Mr. Lynch and the Fianna Fail Party the uncomfortable embarrassment which followed.  
(Mary Morrissey, 89 Lansdowne Park, Ennis Road, Limerick. Irish Times, 28th August, 1973.)

## FINE GAEL — AS SEEN BY MICHAEL O'LEARY.

"The only coalition which Labour can consider after this resolution is carried, is one where it controls the majority of seats. I reject the view of those who urge a Fine Gael-Labour coalition, Labour being a junior partner, even though they plead the exigencies of maintaining democratic life here as their reason ... By taking a back seat in a Fine Gael dominated government, Labour would once more be giving a vital injection to that system. On all the great issues the two main parties held identical views. In essence, Fine Gael was an alliance between the most reactionary elements of the countryside and a certain section of the professional classes of the towns".

Michael O'Leary, Labour Party, T.D., speaking at a meeting of the Limerick Branch of Tuairim, reported in the Limerick Leader, 14th October, 1968.

# Women of Limerick

## BEAUTY AND THE BEAST?

### Women of Limerick.

Your praises have long been sung by poet and balladeer. Your beauty is legendary! Allow me to hold aloft the poet's mirror. But first a warm pleas. Let's strip away myth and face some naked reality! Are you brave enough? Your bravery, of course, has already been noted:

*Limerick, behold thy daughters proud and fair  
Like arm'd angels flying to the war!*

War? Does the naked reality demand war? Not perhaps like the time of old when—

*The mother from her arms lost the child  
And grasp'd a stone and joined the conflict wild  
The maids threw by their mantles with a shout  
And armed with missiles on the host sprung out ...  
O'er the thick dead and valiant women strode  
Their hands and hair and garments drenched with blood.*

Your predecessors rose to that murderous challenge. Now look carefully in that mirror. Do you recognise a modern foe? A "murderous host"? Whose image do you see — husband? boyfriend? employer? priest? City Manager? Government? Male dominated society? Can you face those oppressive forces besieging you? Even your own wily weapons are turned against you. The modern equivalent of many a Maryanne whose ... *bosom is smoother than silk, And white as a silver cup flowing with new milk* is so busily "crossing her heart" that she fails to detect the insidious admen preying in her bosom of fear.

Still the mirror offers hope —

*But thy fair white breast may nourish  
Sons who will their country cherish.*

Cherishing their country may however prove a little difficult for some of your offspring if findings of a recent survey on child development are considered. The survey, financed by the Irish Medical Research Council suggests that 81% of the children from families with nine or more children were found to be under average height. About 42% of the children of skilled and unskilled manual workers are definitely small for their age. In a further classification of children's height and weight according to housing conditions the survey shows that 60% of the smallest children and 40% of the thinnest live in very poor conditions. So such poetic praise as—

*... White was her breast of love ...*

— is little protection for you against a society which offers poor housing conditions and an inadequate family planning system.

— But why worry? The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world! But —

*If the hand that rocks the cradle  
All the world rules  
Why this state of chassis  
Were all our mothers fools??*

Perhaps your hand which should be rocking the cradle is obliged by your economic necessity to keep some factory production line moving. No doubt enough stress there to cloud that cheek —

*Like a flower in full bloom  
and that brow once —  
graceful and bright o'er her eyes dancing light  
Like a lily bent over a sloe:*

Perhaps however you see work as an outlet or as a fulfillment. The newspapers reporting on a recent seminar entitled "The Family to-day", organised by the Kilkenny Social Services Centre, quoted the following from a lecture given there: *Research had shown that while there could be difficulties of adjustment, there was nothing detrimental in a wife's working. Work enhanced the personality, but it was up to the Christian community to ensure that conditions of work for married women were improved — to relate hours of duty to their domestic circumstances, for example.*

Now look in that mirror again. No, I don't think it's your eyesight — detecting that "Christian Community" is rather difficult. Financial problems however won't concern some of you. And what does the poet's mirror offer you if, to put it metaphorically, you're sitting on the pig's back: —

*The rich man's daughter proudly goes  
In glittering silk and showy gold  
But wealth and art her charms compose  
And all for wealth her heart is sold.*

What a pity because the poet's ideal Flower of Limerick —

*... had a mind whose virgin fire  
Was brought by angels from the sky.*

But being rich you'll have a mind to go to Laurel Hill, perhaps, and then? — ah — Trinity. Excellent. Educate that you may be free. What's a little social inequality along the way? Or perhaps your educational system doesn't encourage too deeply a quest for answers that might upset nice cosy assumptions. Then, when the silver spoonfeeding is completed, how desirous to saddle some other pig and tally ho!

*Chasing the world's evil pleasure  
In love with suppers cards and balls  
And luxurious sins of festive halls ...*

A trifle too erotic or decadent for you? How about an image from "The Praises of Limerick"?

*Our wives behind counters not saucy nor slatterns  
are*

*For meekness, politeness and goodness they  
patterns are*

*It would do your heart good on the mall where  
they walk at eve*

*To see them so dressy, so flirtish, so talkative.*

Your predecessors of the 18th century made life so unbearable for that particular author that he had to betake himself to foreign parts.

Coming back to savage reality, the habit of betaking himself to foreign parts is still the recognised refuge of the Irish Husband.

*The pram wheels creak  
Re-echoing collapse.  
Two luckless cherubs  
Stare wide eyed  
A tattered quilt across their laps.  
She pushes, pushes, on ... on  
A vacant look of pain  
The morning holds no hope —  
The husband's gone.*

Dealing with the law as it affected broken marriages Mr. Jimmy O'Reilly, lecturer in the Law Faculty, U.C.D., said that "husband and wife were ideally of equal status, but legislation did not reflect this. The husband and wife were one person, but that person was the husband. Most of the Irish Legislation on Family Law was frozen in concepts of the 19th century". (Irish Times, July 2nd 1973). Alas, our mirror offers little consolation to deserted wives or the permanently deserted — the widow:

*Fingering her purse  
Fingering each coin  
Livering over  
Each cut-price sign.*

Ah mirror, mirror on the wall which sex is most oppressed of all? What say you Women of Limerick?

### FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

*Dr. Kelleher said that, at the present time, farmers were using every opportunity with the weather to save their hay crops and, therefore, the most LUCRATIVE source of blood donors was in the cities and large towns.*

(Limerick Chronicle, 9th August, 1973).

## In search of . . .

PART FIVE

by Jim Kemmy

John Francis  
O'Donnell

## THE PROLIFIC POET

O'Donnell took an active interest in the trial of the "Manchester Martyrs", William Allen, Michael Larkin and Michael O'Brien. The three men had been captured during a Fenian raid on a prison van. Their public execution had a profound effect on O'Donnell, and he poured his intense nationalist feelings into the poem *DEAD*, published in the *IRISHMAN*:

*Had they died for a dream they were noble,  
Having died for the truth they were great,  
Proud hearts that beat highest and swiftest  
As swiftest and darkest gloomed fate  
We were told we were dead as a nation -  
A corpse with its face to the sky -  
Objectless, powerless, hopeless -  
They gave it the lie.*

*Had if Ireland, cursed, beggared, and slandered,  
Had nothing to show for her cause,  
Save protests, remonstrances, wailings,  
Against England her lash and her laws  
The Nations might blush for our meanness,  
Or laugh at our eloquent night;  
Those corpses below have redeemed us,  
They fought the good fight.*

*They fought it - they proved to our Masters  
The truth that too long was unfelt:  
No dungeon can hold or extinguish -  
The fire and the force of the Celt;  
'Twas seen in the white face of London -  
'Twas seen in its wild unreprieve,  
Three men stirred the land like an earthquake,  
And these three men were those.*

O'Donnell continued to write prose and poetry at full pressure. It was normal for him to write for half-a-dozen or more journals and magazines at the same time. His friend, Richard Dowling, in the introduction to the posthumous collection of O'Donnell's poetry, *Poems*, describes the poet's flair for writing verse:

*In after life he never forgot the phonographic art. He was the first man I ever knew well who wrote shorthand fluently, and the first man I ever knew well who could write verse on the spur of the moment. I shall never forget the astonishment with which I saw him exercise the two arts conjointly. He and I were chatting, between night and morning, about a poem which he had conceived the idea of while we talked. He said, "Wait a minute", pulled a letter out of his pocket, and began writing with great rapidity on the back of it. "How is this?" he asked, after a few minutes, during which his hand had not ceased to move over the paper. He read the poem out. I said what I thought, and asked to see the M.S. "It won't be much use to you", said he, with a laugh as he threw the paper across the table. The sheet was covered with characters that looked to me like Arabic dancing mad, which he assured me was fairly good phonography, for a man out of practice. "And can you always write verse as quickly as that?" I asked. "Well," he said, "I can make the verses as quickly as that, but they have to be written out in longhand. When I am very*

*particular, I jot down the poem nearly as fast as you saw me just now, throw the paper into a drawer, never think of it for a couple of weeks then take it out and finish". "Why", said I, "you write verse as fast as prose". "Faster", said he, "as a matter of speed, I could turn out a column of verse sooner than a column of prose".*

Following the futile Fenian rising of 1867, O'Donnell's poetry took on a new perspective. While still retaining his strong feelings of nationalism, he looked around for new themes and back on old ones. Many of his poems written in this period hark back to his childhood in Limerick and others examine the loneliness of exile. And to further demonstrate his versatility and many-sidedness, O'Donnell began to explore yet another quality in his repertoire, his hitherto underdeveloped facility for humorous writing.

In 1870 *Zozimus*, a comic illustrated paper, was started in Dublin by A.M. O'Sullivan, with Richard Dowling as editor. From the first to the last issue, John Francis O'Donnell was one of its principal, if not its chief contributor. During the course of two long visits to Dublin made by O'Donnell between 1871 and his death, his acquaintance with Dowling ripened into friendship. And in one of his poems, *The Return*, the poet describes his impressions on returning to Dublin.

*Once more the red familiar streets  
Are round me; and the Irish sky  
Filled with myriad cloudy seats,  
Bends deep above. The sea is nigh:  
I fancy that its music comes  
Between the triply-breasted ships,  
Where Dublin quay clasps close the tide,  
Palace and hovel reared beside  
And the salt wind upon my lips.*

*Dear City of the days long dead,  
Whose hopeless Hope o'erlooks the seas,  
Thy very life with Death is wed -  
Where are the dazzling pageantries?  
Where is the pride that nerved thee once -  
The glory of secure renown?  
Thou seated there provincialised,  
Beggared and utterly despised -  
Green with rent robe and shattered crown.*

Richard Dowling in writing about O'Donnell's work for *Zozimus* again returns to his amazement and admiration for his friend's versatility and speed of composition:

*For Zozimus he did all kinds of work, and each admirably - one-line jokes, paragraphs, verse, grave and gay, and a serial story. The fertility and facility of the man were most astonishing. His amazing readiness barred the production of results more enduring than the hack work of a journalist. Anything within his powers of doing he could begin on the instant. His very readiness must often - to make a bull - have stopped his way, and there can be no doubt it got him into straits he never would have entered had he been more deliberate. In a letter of his, published in the *IRISH MONTHLY*, he says, "I seldom refuse a quarrel". He kept the circle of his friends narrow by his hatred of anything like a suspicion of patronage. The generosity of his disposition made*

*"For life is not an idle pact  
With fate - it means to strive, to act"  
("Francis Clare" - J.F. O'Donnell).*

*it more easy for him to do a dozen favours than accept one. He was completely destitute of method, and he could not drudge. A vast quantity of his best work was thrown off in journalism from week to week, and with the close of the week most of the interest in it passed away for ever. He had to toil hard and incessantly to make ends meet, and he told in 1872 that for thirteen years he had never taken a holiday but one of a week, when peremptorily ordered rest by his doctor.*

O'Donnell now gave his talent for comic writing full rein and the issues of *Zozimus* for 1871 and 1872 are filled with various examples of his work. Though the articles and poems in the paper are unattributed, O'Donnell's style is clearly discernible throughout. Most of the verses are cleverly written pieces on lightweight topics of the day, but a few telling social comments are occasionally slipped in. In *A Word On An Old Subject*, published in *Zozimus* on December 23rd, 1871, O'Donnell exposes some of the injustice and lay and clerical hypocrisy of the society around him:

*Beded it seems quare,  
And it bothers me head,  
That just here and there  
'Tis, that people are fed;  
That some can eat beef and plum-pudding,  
And others be starving for bread.*

*They say 'tis all right,  
That these things must be so;  
That the poor's appetite  
Has no call for to grow;  
I'm only an ignorant person,  
And can't be expected to know.*

*They say that our need  
Has a heavenly source;  
That for paupers to feed  
Is unpleasant and course;  
As they never did without dinner,  
The sermon has double the force.*

*Perhaps we should thank  
Them, and take it as kind,  
For being so frank  
As to tell us their mind.  
But when one has gone without breakfast,  
He, somehow, don't feel so inclined.*

*They say that we're rough,  
And ill-mannered and rude;  
Though we're thoughtful enough  
When we get in the mood.  
'Tis a beautiful question to study,  
How long one can stay without food.*

O'Donnell's *Zozimus* writings are remarkably free of nationalistic influences. In *A Vision Of Saint Valentine*, he comes out against celibacy:

*Then the celibate dies,  
And nobody cries,  
And nobody cares  
But his nephews - his heirs -  
Who look o'er his affairs;  
And, to their dismay,  
They discover, some day,*

continued on facing page

# No Room for Sean Bourke

NO PASSENGERS ALLOWED ...  
SOMETIMES

SINCE his return to his native city, Limerick, writer, Sean Bourke has taken an active interest in the workings of the law and in the general question of penal reform. His activities and his letters to the newspapers have clearly not gone unnoticed by the police and the press. Two recent incidents will serve to emphasise this fact.

Half an hour after midnight on Saturday, August 18th, a squad car pulled up outside the front door of Sean Bourke's house at Lisnalty, Co. Limerick. A policeman came into the house and told him that his uncle, the well-known Mikey "Feathery" Bourke, an elderly recluse who lives alone, was dying in his home at the North Circular Road. According to the policeman, they had received reports that he had not been seen for several days and was believed to be at death's door. The police had therefore come to his nephew's house to officially ask him to go to his uncle's house and investigate the matter. Needless to say, Sean Bourke agreed to go on the spot.

Lisnalty is a couple of miles from the city and Bourke had no transport of his own. It was also raining, and, as it was after midnight on a Saturday night, he had little chance of hitching a lift or getting a taxi. As Bourke showed the policeman to the gate and into the squad car, he asked him if they could give him a lift into town, as they were going that way anyway. The policeman refused. He said: "We can't do that, it isn't allowed, we're not insured". So, at nearly one o'clock in the morning, in the rain and the dark, Bourke had to walk the three miles from Lisnalty to the North Circular Road to attend to the needs of a dying man at the request of the police - whilst the squad car which had summoned him raced off ahead with the back seat empty.

IN SEARCH OF ...  
JOHN FRANCIS O'DONNELL  
continued from facing page

*Though their uncle had led such a niggardly life  
(he would not incur the expense of a wife);  
He'd a favorite hobby - and once safely mounted  
Upon it, was robbed of sums scarce to be counted;  
It may have been china, or pictures, or stamps,  
Coins, or canaries, or even old lamps -  
For this last a precedent: had not Aladdin  
An uncle who lived in the time of Saladin,  
And for amusement collected old lamps?  
For at that time they hadn't gone mad upon  
stamps.*

*With a bow of his head,  
Saint Valentine said: -  
"I've finished my task,  
And all that I ask*

*"Is that you will make known to your numerous  
friends  
Celibacy's short-sight, and show how it tends  
To lower a man in the eyes of his friends.*

When Zozimus ended its brief life, O'Donnell once again shifted papers. From his London home, he continued his strenuous struggle to establish himself in the literary world. And he had now entered the last stage of his thirty-seven-year life,

(to be continued).

Most people are under the impression that in cases of emergency (and what could be a greater emergency than a matter of life and death?) persons involved in that emergency could legitimately be conveyed in police vehicles, particularly when the police themselves are involved. Certainly Tom Tobin, former editor of the Limerick Leader and the Limerick Weekly Echo, appears to have had little difficulty in accommodating himself to this belief. In an article in the Evening Press on July 3rd, Tobin describes his method of travelling home after a night's drinking:

*Indeed, I was noted for leaving the car and getting a lift home. If none of my friends were around I would get a taxi and there were times when I travelled home in style thanks to the goodness of the gardai who never refused my request for a lift home.*

The contrast between the treatment given to Tom Tobin and Sean Bourke is striking. If the police are not insured to carry Bourke, do they have some special policy to cover boozy editors of powerful newspapers?

Or would the attitude of the police to Sean Bourke have anything to do with his letters to the press, especially his letter, published in the Irish Independent the previous day (August 17th), in which he exposed the Limerick police for their brutal beating-up of suspects in and on their way to the barracks?

## THE LEADER AND THE WINDY CITY

IN early August, Sean Bourke wrote a letter to the Limerick Leader about police brutality in Limerick. Bernard Carey, the paper's news editor, asked Bourke to call in to see him and stated that he had two reporters checking out the supplied list of names of the victims. "This is dynamite", Carey told Bourke. "We'll have to hold it back 'till next week".

So far, so good. But the Leader had second thoughts. Not only did the paper not print the letter but, on the day on which it should have appeared (August 25th), the Leader launched an editorial attack on Limerick children and accused them of trying to turn the city into "a little Chicago".

Ah well, the Limerick Leader has to think of its 75% advertising space, and the sensitive advertisers who provide the paper with a profit in the region of £1,000 every week. The parents of Garryowen and Southill are not important - so long as they provide circulation fodder to support the lucrative advertising revenue.

Even a brief examination of the Leader's editorials will show their insincerity and inconsistency. A few weeks earlier, the paper had hypocritically pontificated on the need to recognise and fight injustice "on our own doorsteps" before looking further afield. The Leader editorials are, however, written principally to appeal to the advertisers' gallery and should be taken with a big pinch of salt. The paper ranks as one of the most cautious and conservative in Ireland or Britain.

But perhaps the Leader needed what little space it had left between the advertisements for all those rave notices and pictures which it automatically gives to every "drama" and jobbing actor sent down from Dublin for the annual Limerick City Theatre and Boozing Festival.

And what of the suppressed letter? Unlike the

timorous Leader, the Irish Independent published it in full on August 17th. Anyone living in the real Limerick will be aware that Sean Bourke's statements are rooted in reality whereas the Leader editorial is based on prejudice and distortion. Bourke wrote:

*After two years of intensive research for a book, during which time I have attended courts on numerous occasions and spoken to dozens of defendants, I can assure you that it has now become a matter of routine in (named) city for suspects to be subjected to physical beatings in the police cells, and sometimes even before they go to the cells. One particularly disgraceful and disturbing case comes to mind. Not very long ago, three youths were apprehended on an enclosed premises by a number of Gardai. An hour later, all three youths were being stitched up in hospital. According to the doctor, one youth required 18 stitches, another needed 28, and the third youth had to have 33 stitches. And the "haul" of these desperate criminals? a knife and fork valued at 35 pence. The Gardai in court accused the youths of attacking them with an iron bar but, as the defence Counsel pointed out, no iron bar was produced in court. Yet, incredible though it may sound, these three youths were sent to prison for assaulting the Gardai ...*

"I think we all tend to be a bit hypocritical in our attitude to authority. In particular, we tend to apply double standards when considering the actions of the authorities north of the Border and those of the authorities in the South. The R.U.C. are no more brutal than the Twenty-Six County police, whom we politely, if euphemistically, call "Civic Guards". There can be no doubt that some of these people should never have been accepted into the Force, but should have been sent back to the mountains to milk their cows and dig their turf. That way, at least, their aggressive instincts

## INJUSTICES HERE IN LIMERICK (LEADER)

TO pontificate, at a comfortable distance, on global issues is one thing. To honestly expose injustices on our own doorsteps is, however, quite definitely another. No-one, surely, will deny that many injustices at local level are frequently and conveniently glossed over ... And are those of us, journalists included, who are in a position to right wrongs by exposing them, living up to ours? If not, we share the guilt.

(Limerick Leader editorial, Aug. 4th, 1977)

would be sublimated and channelled along more socially useful lines. Finally, I would like to make the following recommendations, (1) Templemore Training Depot should be closed down (or, better still, turned into a hostel for the rehabilitation of ex-prisoners); (2) All new recruits should be sent to England for their training. There, at least, they would have the advantage of being trained by comparatively civilised and sophisticated people. And that, Mr. Editor, is not spoken with tongue in cheek."

And perhaps a case could also be made for the sending of the Leader's editorial writers to England to learn how to write objective editorials. But, then, it is unlikely that the paper's owners and advertisers would agree to this departure.

However, the LEADER'S prediction that "Limerick seems destined to become some sort of little Chicago" may not be totally inaccurate. Chicago is known as the "Windy City" and Limerick has been described as the "City of Piety and Shitey". But if the LEADER continues in its present "wind and waffle" editorials the paper could well earn yet another title for Limerick.

## SHANNON:

## SLIPPERY TOM

## SLIDES OUT

Since his arrival on the political scene, over twelve years, Tom O'Donnell, the Fine Gael T.D., has shown himself to be a slippery and skilful operator. A committed capitalist, he has managed to steer the delicate line dividing the Irish Farmers Association and the Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers' Association while picking up votes from both groups of farmers. O'Donnell has even been able to gull some workers into voting for him through his carefully-cultivated "hail fellow, well met" approach.

But O'Donnell's name has almost become synonymous with Shannon Airport over the years. As shadow minister for Transport and Power, he always had a good brief on Shannon and used it to keep his own name and that of the airport's in the public eye. O'Donnell contacts in Shannon and the inside information made available to him have frequently been a source of speculation among politicians and members of the public.

O'Donnell had always been a vigorous and vocal advocate of maintaining Shannon as the country's only Transatlantic Airport. Over the last six years, he gained a vast amount of publicity through his implacable opposition to any change in the Shannon status quo.

During vital talks on Shannon's future held in New York in November 1971, O'Donnell made his attitude clear in a statement reported in the *Limerick Leader* (22/11/1971):

*He wanted to issue a final warning to the Government that any compromise on the landing rights issue which would allow even one U.S. carrier into Dublin would be tantamount to a sell-out of the national airline, Shannon Airport and the western tourist industry. No Irish Government in its sane senses could agree to such a massive sell-out and it was high time that the Taoiseach and the Government stopped cowering before the U.S. threats and bullywork and showed some kind of determined leadership in fighting this outrageous act of aggression by the Americans.*

O'Donnell, after "a detailed and exhaustive study of the issues involved" gave his assessment of the cost, at the end of five years, of admitting the U.S. carrier into Dublin:

- \* The loss of at least 1,000 jobs in Shannon Airport alone.
- \* The loss of a further 4,000 jobs in tourism and ancillary businesses in the western half of Ireland.
- \* The closure of 50 per cent of all the hotels and guest-houses along the west coast.
- \* The loss to the West of Ireland of £20m., of annual revenue.
- \* The loss to the national airline of at least £1m. per year.

During this year's General Election campaign, Fine Gael issued two election documents on behalf



## FOLLOWING SARSFIELD

of the three East Limerick candidates. In the first, O'Donnell in a message to the voters, stated that:

*He had played a leading part in the campaign, to maintain Shannon as the country's only Transatlantic Airport.*

In the other leaflet, O'Donnell and the other two candidates, Russell and Kennedy, made eight pledges, the first of which stated their determination to work for the following:

*To maintain Shannon as our only Transatlantic Airport.*

But after February's election, O'Donnell was made Minister for the Gaeltacht in the National Coalition Government. After this, the new Minister, knowing that his Shannon "No overflying" game was now up, said nothing on his favourite topic. Details of the new air agreement permitting American Airlines to operate into Dublin were announced on 12th June. O'Donnell was then, naturally enough in a hot seat as local people remembered his "No Irish Government in its sane senses could agree to such a massive sell-out" statement.

However, the minister sat tight and said nothing, hoping that the storm would soon die down. On June 16th, the *Limerick Leader*, spotting a good story, tried to contact O'Donnell, but he was stated by a Department spokesman to be "not in". On June 20th, he finally broke his silence and put on his best "Slippery Sam" act. The *Limerick Leader* reported his long awaited statement:

*The new Ireland - U.S. Bilateral Air Agreement was in the circumstances the best that could be negotiated ... I want to publicly commend the Shannon Regional Action Committee, Shannonside Tourism and S.F.A.D.Co. on their realistic and courageous reaction to the announcement of the agreement ... I can assure all the interested parties that any practical proposals for the further development of traffic into Shannon will receive the most careful and sympathetic consideration from the Government.*

Since this speech, O'Donnell has sung dumb on Shannon. Thus his six years' agitation came to an unprincipled and shallow end. O'Donnell's about-face on the landing rights question only serves to show the insincerity which has characterised his politics since he started his career. The fact that he succeeded in surviving the Shannon somersault without unduly disturbing the East Limerick electorate also serves to show the apathy and cynicism felt by the people towards party politics.

Patrick Sarsfield is, generally, if vaguely, regarded as one of Catholic Ireland's greatest heroes; his name is accorded an honoured place in school history books; poems and songs about his exploits continue to circulate; and Limerick, the scene of many of his deeds, has commemorated his memory in the form of a statue in Cathedral Place. And in an attempt to update the hero's image to meet the demands of the seventies, Shannonside, the local tourist promotion body, has now cut itself in on a slice of the spin-off from the action of 1690.

On Sunday, 12th August, exactly 283 years after Sarsfield's famous ride to Ballyneety to blow up the train load of ammunition, Shannonside organised a cavalcade of cars to re-enact the journey. Though the commemoration tour caused little or no interest among Limerick workers, it seems as if a new campaign is to be launched to build Sarsfield into an even bigger hero and tourist attraction. This year's Feile na Maighe also had a strong Sarsfield flavour and its theme, "The Wild Geese", gave plenty of scope to the glorification of the local hero.

The "popular" image of Sarsfield and the Wild Geese was clearly expressed by Dr. Richard Hayes in an article titled, *Notable Limerick Men on the Continent*, in a booklet published in 1951 as a tercentenary commemoration of the Siege of Limerick:

*It is mostly, but not entirely, as soldiers one meets them through the centuries - they were of the gallant company of the Wild Geese who spread the grey wing on every tide for more than two hundred years in their flight across the few countries in Europe where their valour and chivalry are not still remembered. At home in the desolate Ireland they left, their deeds abroad were heard of with pride and hope, and up to our own day have been an inspiration for every generation. Defeat, followed by outlawries and confiscations, had driven them from the Ireland they had battled to free. Their fate was tragic but not ignoble. "They lost everything", said one who was not of their spiritual kin, "but they never lost honour; and because they did not lose that, their overthrow was bewailed in song and music which will not cease to sound for centuries.*

Thus has the history of Sarsfield and the "gallant company" been preserved down the ages by Catholic historians. But what is the real history of the man who has given his name to streets, houses and countless sporting clubs and political branches in Limerick and throughout the Republic?

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Catholic Ireland had no national existence. Owen Roe O'Neill's campaigns could not succeed in reviving the clan system. The narrow interests of the Old-English and Irish landed aristocracies could not develop a national movement. Patrick Sarsfield, Earl of Lucan, served as a reactionary Jacobite in England before coming to Ireland in the service of a parasitic, feudal English interest. After the Treaty of Limerick, Sarsfield took his army to the Continent to serve European feudalism against English and Dutch democracy.

The most coherent force operating in Catholic Ireland, at this time, was the influence of the Vatican, which was consciously using Ireland as a base for operations in the Counter-Reformation, i.e., the feudal counter revolution against the bourgeois - democratic revolution which was centred in England in the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. This feudal counter-offensive prevented the development of a modern, democratic nationalist movement in Ireland.

Patrick Sarsfield, for all his riding and fighting, represented the backward forces of feudalism against the rise of modern democracy. But you are unlikely to read that fact in any Shannonside tourist brochure.

# THALIDOMIDE

## THE STORY THAT DIED

Previous features on the Thalidomide scandal have appeared in issues of the "Limerick Socialist" for November and December 1972 and in the February issue earlier this year. The rash of newspaper and other media publicity has faded to a mere trickle. But, needless to remark, those who suffered from the marketing of the disaster drug are not any better off. And, indeed, in a most sinister and significant development it would seem as if the legal apparatus of the bourgeois state has now trundled into motion in a determined attempt to prevent full and fair investigation and publication of the cause of the marketing of the drug that caused such misery.

The Law Lords of the British House of Lords, in an historic and truly incredible judgement, have recently banned publication in "The Sunday Times" of an article which examined how the damaging drug was made, tested and marketed in Britain. It will be recalled that it was the "Sunday Times" in a series of articles beginning in September of last year that dragged the buried thalidomide issue out of the safe cocoon into which legal litigation, extending over a decade, had conveniently slotted it.

Not content with banning future publications on the matter, several of the eminent Lords indicated quite clearly that they would have banned the original articles on the thalidomide scandal had they been asked then by the Attorney General or the drug manufacturers, Distillers Biochemical. It will be recalled that it was the storm of publicity and mass liberal outrage which followed in the wake of "The Sunday Times" features that forced the manufacturers to increase the compensation that they were to pay the victims from a paltry £3 million to a figure proposed which now stands at around £20 million. *That is to say that if these eminent gentlemen and the precedents established by the bourgeois legal system were to have their way, then the unfortunate children who suffered from the effects of the disaster drug would be no more likely at this stage to be in prospect of receiving anything more than the miserable £3 million contemptuously offered by one of the richest and most profitable capitalist enterprises in Great Britain.*

The issue will now most likely be buried. The compensation of £20 million has now been approved by the High Court in London and is to be

paid out in two stages to the 433 children crippled for their shortened life by the drug Thalidomide - a total of £6 million will go directly to the children, and the remaining £14 million will form a fund set aside for the children's future.

Needless to remark, the 100 or so Irish children affected by the drug will have to settle for a much lower level of settlement - that dictated by the German government and parent company which invented the "wonder" drug - Chemie Grunenthal. Much publicised efforts by that wealthy campaigner on behalf of the downtrodden - Dr. John O'Connell, Labour T.D. (which coincidentally happened to gain him valuable time on the mass media in the month or two before the General Election) seemed to have borne no fruit. Equally the "Sunday Independent" which got some mileage out of the issue earlier in the year has dropped like a hot brick.

But to return to the judgement of the Law Lords. There are several implications of the verdict which serve to make the restrictions on the journalist's profession even more repressive. The verdict is entirely weighed in favour of the wealthy. Those who have access to the courts (i.e. those who are rich enough to engage lawyers, institute proceedings, etc.) can now (as assuredly the British company did in the decade that elapsed between the appearance of the effects of the drug and the renewed mass media pressure) effectively stifle criticism of their position, indeed investigation of that very position.

The legal system entirely failed to help those mutilated by the drug. The legal system reacts against those who attempt to do so by placing further restrictions on their work, by getting editors and writers to effectively operate the most valuable form of censorship from the point of view of those in power - self-censorship. The legal system exists to perpetuate the rule of one class - the capitalists and owners of property generally. In the light of this, the Thalidomide judgement is no surprise, and no worker should have any illusions about getting a fair deal from the law. A humane legal system, which can cope in a fair and human fashion with a tragedy such as the Thalidomide affair, will only follow upon the disappearance of the capitalist oligarchy.

### How to Milk a Non-Story . . . in Seven Easy Lessons

#### SCISSORS AND PASTE ... AND DO-IT-YOURSELF JOURNALISM

AnCo, the Industrial Training Authority, held a public meeting in Limerick on July 18th to "promote" its new "discussion document". Apart from the interest shown by local trade unions, some employers and a few parents, the event did not arouse much attention. But the Limerick Leader and the Limerick Chronicle, were not content to leave the matter rest there. An examination of how the affair was treated by these papers provides an interesting insight into the manner in which they view the intelligence and patience of their readers.

The first news of the AnCo meeting appeared in the Limerick Chronicle on July 14th. This report took the form of a reprint of a publicity handout prepared by Tim Dennehy and Associates Ltd., the publicity and public relations firm. The article consisted of a synopsis of the new discussion document made by J. Agnew and J.G. Ryan, two AnCo bosses.

The Limerick Leader followed up on July 21st, with a report of the meeting held at the Parkway. This report made no reference to the contributions made from the floor by parents and trade unionists but merely reprinted the speeches prepared for the Mayor, Mick Lipper and the

AnCo man, J.G. Ryan.

On July 23rd, the Leader continued its AnCo kick by "lifting" its first extract from the discussion document and giving it front page prominence. Keeping the AnCo ball rolling, the Leader followed up with another front page lift from the same document in its next edition of July 25th. And perhaps working on the basis that you can't have too much of a good thing, the Leader kept up the pressure with another extract from the AnCo serial, this time putting it in the inside pages in its edition of August 11th.

But meanwhile, the Leader's sister paper, the Limerick Chronicle had taken up the running. On August 7th, the Chronicle published its first part of the discussion document. Having at last got in on the act, the Chronicle was not going to be denied yet another bite at the AnCo cherry. On August 23rd, the Chronicle promoted its next extract from the now badly ravaged document to the status of main lead story. The fact that at this stage the AnCo policy was over three months out of date, was a matter of little consequence in the Leader/Chronicle's honeymoon with AnCo.

But all good things, apparently, come to an end - even the AnCo document. And so the fund of front page stories dried up. The fact that thousands of free copies of the discussion document were available and in public circulation while the Leader/Chronicle series was being published did not arise.

But the whole affair opens up fascinating possibilities in the field of journalism. If this trend continues, future reporters need not exert themselves in learning shorthand and the skills of writing. A short AnCo course in scissors and paste work will be of far more use. No longer will journalists have to equip themselves with pen and note-book; the ability to use a sharp scissors and apply dollops of paste will supercede the traditional training methods. And AnCo should be pleased at the new breakthrough in this vital field of communications.

But why should the LEADER and CHRONICLE stop with the slim AnCo document? After all, LENIHAN'S HISTORY OF LIMERICK offers far more exciting prospects within its bulky covers.

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## U.D.A. FADES OUT

WHEN THE U.D.A. first appeared on the scene, it appeared to be a massive army — the Protestant community in uniform. There had been all sorts of rumours of secret drilling, and when they finally appeared, complete with masks, dark glasses and wooden batons, they appeared to be a formidable and organised bloc. It was a good piece of theatre and it worked. It reminded anti-Partitionists and the British press that the Protestant nation existed, and that if it came to it, it would fight to maintain its existence.

Since then, however, the U.D.A. has steadily fallen apart. All sorts of 'leadership crises' have arisen to show that there was very little effective central leadership in the first place. It was a loose association of independent bodies, and even those had very little sense of direction of their own. There was a vague feeling that Ulster had to be defended, but no means of getting at the enemy (generally identified as the I.R.A., not the Catholic community as such). The only activity they could indulge in was protest, demonstration, show of strength and the like. Some sections turned to mindless thuggery (including the sectarian assassinations); others to racketeering, others to social work. The bulk of the membership seem to have lost interest — an interest that would quickly be renewed if there was ever any real threat to the Union. In the lack of such a direct military threat the U.D.A. could only have been held together as a movement by clear political leadership — hence all the talk about the U.D.A. becoming a militant pressure group for working class demands. If Craig was ever thinking of assuming this leadership, this would have reminded him that it would have been a dangerous toy. He very definitely renounced the role when he insisted that the Loyalist Coalition would not back anyone who stood for the election as a member of a para-military organisation.

Just as the Protestants have split into Official Unionists who support the White Paper, and Loyalists who oppose it, so the Loyalists themselves are split — not just into DUP and VUPP but into the hard-core militants (who seem to be in decline) and those whose militancy is simply due to suspicion of British intentions or suspicion fed by the irresponsible pointmaking of Wilson and Callaghan). In this respect the lack of support in the elections for Tommy Herron, Billy Hull and Samuel Smyth is encouraging. When it becomes clear (as it will) that the new Constitutional proposals do not threaten the Union, the Loyalist Coalition, if they persist in their present sloganising) will find the going increasingly tough.

### BACK NUMBERS

MANY readers have written in seeking copies of back editions of the LIMERICK SOCIALIST. A limited number of copies of each issue, excluding Vol. 1, No. 4 (April, 1972) and Vol. 2, No. 8 (August, 1973), can be obtained at the rate of 10p per copy (post free) or £1 for 12 copies. Orders for back numbers should be handed in to any newsagent in which the LIMERICK SOCIALIST is sold or sent to the:

LIMERICK SOCIALIST  
33, Greenhill Road,  
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Limerick.



A similar process is happening in the Catholic community. The parliamentary S.D.L.P. (which incorporates both responsible and irresponsible elements) has been solidly backed; the showing of the militant Officials and Provisionals (registered in spoiled votes) ... was minimal. Outside Parliamentary politics, the Provisionals have found themselves more and more isolated, especially since the Central Citizens Defence Committee (which started out its career as an I.R.A. front, and which has substantial support among the most embittered sections of the community) has twice insistently and publicly called on them to stop the war unilaterally and unconditionally.

The decline of militant nationalism (Protestant and Catholic) can only be welcomed. Nationalism divides workers and binds them to their common class interests. Nationalist ideology will continue to be a political force for some years, but when it is no longer organized into armies, it can be explained, discussed and defeated in argument. This is what the Workers' Association has been doing since its inception. It is at the moment the most important task that faces anyone who is living in Ireland (North or South) and is concerned with working class politics.

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